POPULATION TODAY

Vol. 18, No. 12 December 1990

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

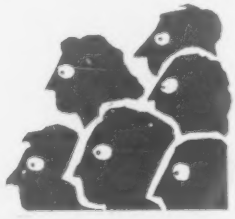
Believe it or not—and no one ever quite believes it—the end of another year is upon us. So too is the end of an era here at PRB: *PT* editor, Arthur Haupt, has left PRB after 14 years of service to venture forth as a freelance writer and editor.

Art first came to PRB in 1976 to serve as editorial assistant to *PT*'s predecessor *Intercom*. In 1983, he became *PT*'s first (and only) editor and provided a sharp wit, keen sense of humor, and prolific pen in developing *PT*'s style and content. Art faithfully covered PAA's annual meetings, kept up on the latest demographic software programs, instituted features such as Populandia, Take a Number, Addenda, and the Annual Index, and provided a fresh focus on demographic trends and events.

Although no one will ever quite "replace" Art here at PRB, we wish him well in his new ventures. Who knows—given Art's flair with words, we may someday see his name in the *New York Times* Book Review. And we can all say that we knew Art when.

Good luck, Art.

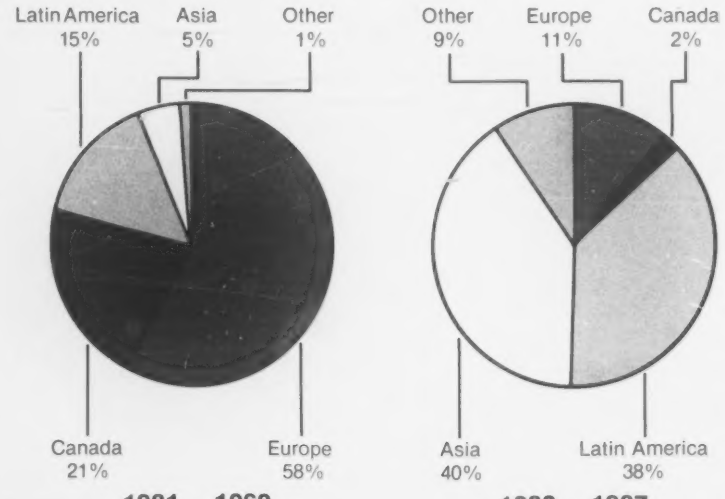
Carol De Vita
Director of Publications



PRB bids farewell to editor Art Haupt

SPEAKING GRAPHICALLY

The Immigrant Pool: Back to the Future?



Immigrants admitted to the United States by region of birth

The new immigration bill would increase "diversity" of the immigrant pool by raising entry levels of "traditional source," mostly European, countries.

Source. America in the 21st Century: A Demographic Overview, Population Reference Bureau, 1990.

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Recycled Paper

Immigration Reform Sweeps Congress

Congressional leaders have put the finishing touches on a new immigration bill that makes major changes to the structure of U.S. immigration. It is expected that the law will be signed by President Bush without further ado.

For the first time, the total amount of immigration will receive an overall limit of 700,000 a year (reduced to 675,000 starting fiscal year 1995). This compares with 497,789 immigrants admitted during fiscal year 1989, which ended on September 30, 1989. These limits are somewhat flexible, however, since the number of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens will be allowed to "pierce" the cap set on the family preference category.

The 700,000 figure (like the 497,789 figure for 1989) excludes refugees admitted under the Refugee Act of 1980.

In FY 1989, an additional 114,321 immigrants entered as refugees or asylees, Amerasians born in Vietnam, Cuban/Haitian entrants, and members of other special categories. The President has set the number allowed under the various refugee allotments at 131,000 in the current year and a like number can be expected for FY 1992 when the new law will take effect. So, the total number of legal immigrants that can be expected in FY 1992 is about 830,000 (compared to 612,110 in FY 1989, that is, 497,789 + 114,321).

U.S. immigration policy has always been generous to relatives of citizens and resident aliens and the new law follows that tradition, although by a rather circuitous route. The new law purports to limit this overall category, a departure from the previous law, which applied no ceilings at all on immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. The official total allowed in FY 1992 will be 465,000. Of these, 220,000 will be immediate relatives of citizens and 245,000 will be relatives of resident noncitizens ("family preference"). But the 465,000 limit *can* be exceeded.

If the number of immediate relatives of citizens rises above the allotted 220,000, visas will be shifted from the family preference category, but *only* down to a "floor" of 226,000. Once that floor is reached, no more visas can be shifted to the immediate relative of citizens category. But that does not mean that no more immediate relatives will be admitted.

At this point the cap of 465,000 is "pierced" and total immigration can actually rise above the 700,000 limit. How likely is this to actually happen? Apparently, not very likely since the 220,000 visas set aside for immediate relatives is based on recent experience and seems to be a good guess as to the future numbers.

Nonetheless, the drafters still hold that the immigration of immediate relatives has no limit. On to the other provisions.

Much of the balance of the immigrant slots are employment related, with 140,000 annually going to those with needed occupational skills, including 10,000 for "employment-generating investors." For three years starting in FY 1991, Hong Kong, a British crown colony that reverts to China in 1997, doubles its current visa allocation to 10,000 per year. An additional 36,000 visas over three years are reserved for managerial-level employees of U.S. firms and their families. After 1994, Hong Kong will receive a "full country quota."

A three-year "transitional diversity

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Final Census Counts Coming

At the end of December, the final state counts from the 1990 Census will be placed on the President's desk. The numbers have had a perilous trip this time around. After an early flap over the rate of return of census forms, the fires were fanned again in late August when the preliminary counts were released to local governments and the media.

The early, incomplete count of a little under 246 million raised some questions since the total population has been estimated to be 250 million. News coverage played the discrepancy to the hilt. To be fair, most press stories did point out that the counts were preliminary, but that subtlety became lost in a chorus of "we wuz robbed" complaints. The public was left with the impression of a crippled census count.

What's actually happened so far, however, has been somewhat less sensational than that. The public returned 63 percent of the census forms while the bureau had budgeted funds for follow-up activities assuming a rate of 70 percent. That cost some extra money, but by the end of July all 100 million households on the list had been identified.

Then commenced a series of programs designed to corral those who had still been missed: the "Were You Counted" campaign, count reviews comparing tract level data to 1980, housing coverage checks, and local review. Local review is a cooperative process whereby the bureau and local governments continue to work together to verify counts, locate map errors, and determine the status of potential housing units still in question. During the late 1980s, the Census Bureau held hundreds of workshops around the country to instruct local governments in how to perform local reviews, check counts, and issue a documented challenge.

They must have learned well, for this process resulted in 7,600 challenges, 6,600 of them supported by some sort of documentation.

Unfortunately, the cooperative nature of the local review process frequently becomes lost in the concern that any undercount will mean somewhat fewer federal funds, particularly for large cities. Although there will certainly be more acrimonious times ahead, both the cities and the bureau will benefit from the continued improvement of the first-ever automated mapping system of the computer-based TIGER files. This remarkable tool has "geocoded" the entire nation—down

Continued on page 6

PRB Hosts Annual Dinner, Honors Mauldin

Amid the burnished oak-paneled walls and gleaming brass fittings of the National Press Club, the population community gathered to honor author and population expert Parker Mauldin at PRB's Annual Dinner, November 1.

PRB board chair Joe Fisher announced the election of Laura M. Olson as an honorary fellow, in recognition of her long service on the PRB Board of Directors. Tom Merrick, PRB president, announced that pioneering demographer and long-time PRB board member Conrad Taeuber and his wife Dorothy were moving to Nashua, New Hampshire, to be closer to family (an example of "reverse migration" into the Frost Belt?).

Charles F. Westoff, director of the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, presented to Parker Mauldin the PRB award for "outstanding contributions to increased understanding and awareness of population issues."

Throughout his career, Mauldin assisted developing countries in population activities, and made methodological advances in the evaluation of family planning programs. Currently, he is a consultant in the Population Sciences Division of the Rockefeller Foundation and a senior associate at the Population Council. He formerly worked for the Census Bureau, and consulted for the World Bank, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and the U.N. Fund for Population Activities.

The median population projection of the U. N. puts this decade's increase in world population at almost 1 billion, or a fifth of the entire population of the world today, said Mauldin, but even this enormous figure might go much higher without a "large increase in funding and effort."

Just to maintain the current level of contraceptive use, Mauldin estimated, would require the recruitment of more than 100 million new users by the year 2000. To achieve the U.N.'s median projection, contraceptive prevalence in developing countries must increase from 51 to 59 percent, and the number of contraceptive users from 381 to 567 million.

Carl Haub

Charles Westoff presents PRB award to Parker Mauldin whiles Joe Fisher looks on.

Mauldin used contraceptive prevalence as a predictor of total fertility rates, a procedure that yields estimates to 85 percent accuracy, he said. In the 1960-1965 period, only 30 million married women of reproductive age used contraceptives. In the 1985-1990 period, the number had jumped to 381 million or 51 percent of all women, according to Mauldin. To meet the worldwide population goal he said, sub-Saharan Africa would have to "more than double" its rate of contraceptive use. South Asia is the region "where the largest increase must occur." Pakistan has "done the poorest," and might only achieve 10 percent contraceptive use by the year 2000. India is "moving slowly," but the success story is Bangladesh. There, half of all married women of reproductive age could be using contraceptives by 2000.

The Annual Dinner serves each year as PRB's institutional birthday party. The nonprofit research organization was founded 61 years ago, in 1929, by population specialist Guy Irving Burch.

–S.K.

SOFTWARE

Balance of the Planet is a rather intricate simulation for IBM compatibles or the Mac Plus that puts the fate of the world in the user's hands. It offers the environmentalist the vicarious opportunity to *do* something about environmental problems–even if only on a screen.Definitely not a game, more of a teaching tool, *Balance of the Planet* will most likely appeal to those who are already environmentally minded.

The program essentially consists of a series of formulas that compute the compensating effects of policy decisions. The trick lies in figuring out just how to balance the good effects of a "green" policy decision–eliminating CFC production, for example–with the bad–ceasing to produce goods that people need, such as refrigerators. Your score reflects how well you do and it isn't easy.

Color and graphics are rather minimal, but concepts abound. The 150 screens depicting environmental causes and effects will increase your environmental vocabulary with such terms as riparian habitats (shores and river banks) and fluidized bed combusters (NOT a new method of birth control, but a clean coal-burning technology).

As a demographer, however, I winced at the "Birth Rate" screen, which said that there are "millions" of births worldwide each day. Every week maybe, but not every day.

Balance of the Planet lists for $49.95 and requires a hard disk, color monitor (CGA and up), and 512K on an IBM compatible; the Mac Plus version requires 1 megabyte of RAM. Produced by Chris Crawford Games and adapted for IBM by Incredible Technologies, Inc. An under-the-tree surprise for that environmentalist on your list?

–C.H.

SURVEY REPORT

Turkey

Fertility rates have declined in Turkey, but many women would prefer even smaller families. These were some of the findings of the 1988 Turkish Population and Health Survey, conducted by the Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development. Turkey has conducted censuses at five-year intervals since 1935 and national demographic surveys every five years since 1963.

The 1988 population and health survey collected information on 31,601 household members in 6,552 households: 5,257 ever-married women age 15-49 were interviewed for the women's questionnaire, and 2,264 husbands of these women were included in a men's survey.

Although marriage is nearly universal in Turkey, the 1988 survey gives some indication of a shift in attitudes toward marriage. The proportion of single women under age 25 has increased substantially (about 17 percent). The percentage of women who have never married by the end of their reproductive years has increased slightly. The average age at marriage has risen from 17.6 years in 1983 to 18.2 years in 1988 (although women in the rural areas and in the east marry earlier). Further analysis of the fertility rates reported in the survey indicate that women will have an average of 3.4 lifetime children, a decline from the 1983 rate of 4.1. Yet, the ideal is 2.1 children.

Knowledge of family planning methods is widespread in Turkey, although some methods are more widely recognized than others. While 94 percent of married women recognize the pill or IUD, only 76 percent know of the condom, and 65 percent know of female sterilization. Most husbands also recognize at least one modern method.

F. Iovino

Turkish women average 3.4 children, but their ideal is close to 2.

Sixty-three percent of married women are currently using a method of family planning—15 percent greater than in 1983. About equal proportions (about a third) of women use modern and traditional methods. The most widely used method (26 percent) is withdrawal. The IUD is the next most popular method (14 percent), followed by the condom (7 percent), and the pill (6 percent).

More than a third of the women who gave birth in the year before the survey say the birth was badly timed or not wanted. Twenty-four percent of ever-married women have had at least one induced abortion.

Health concerns, opposition of the husband and lack of knowledge are the main reasons given for non-use of contraception by women exposed to the risk of pregnancy, but who do not want to become pregnant.

Infant and child survival have improved in Turkey, although about 8 percent of children die before the age of one. Rates vary across the country. Less than half of the women giving birth in the five years before the survey had any prenatal care.

—*B.C.S.*

Congress Battles over Family Planning Funds

In addition to its tug-of-war with the Bush Administration over the deficit reduction bill this fall, Congress also carried on a sharp internal struggle over international family planning policies.

On October 28, the final day of its protracted session, Congress approved a $14.7 billion foreign operations bill for fiscal year 1991, with $250 million for population assistance (a $34 million increase from the previous year). The bill contained provisions designed to ensure that the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) actually spends designated funds on family planning, and to protect AID's Office of Population.

The foreign aid bill earlier became a battleground over the so-called Mexico City policy, which denies U.S. funds to foreign, nongovernmental, family planning organizations that provide abortion-related services or information, even with their own private funds.

On October 12, population-funding proponents tried, but failed, to provide $15 million for the United Nation's Population Fund (UNFPA), which current policy has defunded.

Then, on October 19, the Senate hotly debated an amendment by Sen. Tim Wirth (D-CO), which would have extended the more liberal rules for funding foreign governments to nongovernment organizations, such as UNFPA.

Later, Wirth withdrew his amendment in the interests of finishing the entire appropriations process in the face of a threatened filibuster.

But before its withdrawal, the Senate registered what amounted to a straw vote on the Mexico City policy—the first since 1985. The vote was 57-41 "not to table"—that is, in support of—the Wirth amendment. Commented Wirth: "We will overturn the Mexico City policy next year."

—S.K.

Europe's Demographic Future

Alsace's picturesque capital, Strasbourg, was the setting for the Council of Europe's Seminar on Present Demographic Trends and Lifestyles. The purpose of the seminar was to focus the council's attention on the serious demographic issues facing contemporary Europe.

Some 200 European demographers and population specialists gathered September 18-20 to consider and make recommendations on the consequences of demographic changes and how to deal with them.

The chief issue, either directly or indirectly, was low fertility and its effects—eventual population decline and labor force shortages. In addition, north-south tensions also made an appearance when the conference considered the surplus labor force of many Mediterranean countries, particularly Turkey, a member state of the Council of Europe.

The conference's mood was rather upbeat considering the gravity of the issues under consideration. Low birth rates, it was observed, could be addressed by reducing the impact of childbearing upon family income and women's careers. The example of Sweden, which had made great strides in that area and has a rising birth rate, came up more than once. Sweden provides generous time off with pay for working women who give birth, and child care is easily available.

Does Europe need to import culturally diverse workers to fill labor force needs? The consensus seemed to be that other methods, such as retraining and robotics, could go a long way in obviating the need for such a policy.

Delayed family formation, cohabitation, and out-of-wedlock births were matters of major concern at the conference. Any decline in family values was viewed with some alarm and some participants expressed concern over the possible negative effects of group day care on young children.

Still, it was observed that most childbearing takes place in some form of union and a French delegate commented that, according to surveys, women in France want a larger family size than they currently have.

The seminar underscored an increasing interest in demography in Europe. Strasbourg's central location on the Rhine frontier seemed to emphasize the growing unity within Europe.

All heads turned whenever representatives from Eastern European countries spoke—the delegates from Poland had particularly gloomy economic news. The hope that those countries would all soon be members of the Council of Europe was often expressed.

All in all, this was an interesting conference that highlighted the tension between a unifying Europe and the wish of individual countries to maintain cultural identities.

—C.H.

Census Story
Continued from page 3

to the level of individual buildings--allowing instant updates of local geography. As local reviews uncover errors, these can be corrected in both the census map-generating database and in locally maintained files.

How large will the final count be? One estimate calls for adding 2 million people to the original figure, bringing the final tally to 248 million. Such a "miss" is not unprecedented—the 1980 Census was almost 5 million too high in comparison with pre-census estimates. Some reduction in the count might be expected due to increased efforts to reduce double-counting. But, no matter, the release of the final numbers later this month will almost certainly set off the controversy anew.

—C.H.

POPULATION UPDATE

Estimated United States Population:

As of August 1, 1990	251,641,000
As of August 1, 1989	248,003,000

The above estimates, the latest available, include armed forces overseas and are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-25, No. 1065. The estimates do not yet incorporate the preliminary results of the 1990 Census.

Estimated World Population:

As of December 1990	5,360,000,000
Annual growth	93,000,000

Extrapolation from the mid-1990 population on PRB's *1990 World Population Data Sheet*.

Latest Provisional Statistics for the U.S.: June 1990

	12 months ending with June					
	Number		Rate			
Item	1990	1989	1990	1989	1988	1987
Live births	4,131,000	3,957,000	16.6	16.0	15.8	15.5
Deaths	2,170,000	2,149,000	8.7	8.7	8.9	8.7
Natural increase	1,961,000	1,808,000	7.9	7.3	6.9	6.8
Marriages	2,405,000	2,398,000	9.6	9.7	9.7	10.1
Divorces	1,172,000	1,183,000	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.8
Infant deaths	38,700	38,900	9.4	9.9	10.0	10.1
Population base (in millions)	. . .	. . .	249.6	247.1	244.5	242.2

Note. Rates are given per 1,000 population, except for infant deaths, which are given per 1,000 live births.
Source. Monthly Vital Statistics Report (Vol. 39, No. 6) from the National Center for Health Statistics.

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Note: PRB is moving

As of January 1, 1991, PRB's new address will be:
1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 520, Washington, D.C. 20009.
The new phone numbers will be: Population Reference Bureau, 202-483-1100; fax, 202-328-3937; Decision Demographics, 202-462-9400; fax, 202-328-3937.

TAKE A NUMBER

China Headcount: China has announced its official 1990 census count after a brief delay and a flurry of speculation when rumors circulated that the count was a huge 1.4 billion. The official number is a more reasonable 1,113,682,501 for July 1, 1990. The figure is about 13 million higher than the precensal estimate. Some numbers published elsewhere may be a little higher, since China often adds Taiwan and Hong Kong. Other figures from the New China News Agency and quoted in the *New York Times:* The ethnic majority Han Chinese totals 92 percent of the country's population. Growth rates vary sharply for ethnic minorities—as high as 3.6 percent annually for Tibetans and Mongols, while the national growth rate is 1.47 percent a year. This rate indicates that China adds over 16 million people annually despite a very modest growth rate for a developing country.

—C.H.

ADDENDA

Zip Codes of the Rich and Famous

The zip code of a wealthy residential area has long spoken volumes to demographically minded marketers. The mere recitation of five-digit number strings such as 07078 (Short Hills, N.J.), 48013 (Bloomfield Hills, Mich.), and 20817 (Bethesda, Md.) can make the publisher of an upscale shop-at-home catalog salivate. Starting out in 1963 to help automate mail sorting, the zip code has now become shorthand for income level, real estate values, education level, life-style, and racial/ethnic composition.

Now, zip code consciousness has arrived in the world of the TV sitcom. Fox Communications recently launched a one-hour dramatic comedy: "Beverly Hills, 90210." The show portrays the problems of teenage twins, Brenda and Brandon Walsh, who just moved from middle America (Minneapolis), as they struggle to cope with life-styles in this rarified zip.

According to Donnelley Marketing Information Services, other top zip codes for household income include: 19025 (Fort Washington, Pa.), 94027 (Menlo Park, Calif.), 48010 and 48025 (Birmingham, Mich.), 90077 (Los Angeles, Calif.), 60022 (Glencoe, Ill.), 10514 (Chappaqua, N.Y.), and 06897 (Stamford, Ct.).

—S.K.

E.J. Camp

The Walshes: Can they live up to their zip code?

Immigration

Continued from page 3

program" reserves 40,000 visas a year for persons with U.S. job offers who hail from 36 countries that were "adversely affected" by the 1965 changes in immigration law. Forty percent of these go to Ireland; other countries that gain include Poland, Italy, Tunisia, and Egypt.

Finally, the total is brought to 700,000 by providing for 55,000 visas for the backlog of spouses and minor children of recently legalized undocumented aliens.

Changes in FY 1995

All of this will be in force until FY 1995 when the provisions will change a bit. Then, the overall ceiling will drop to 675,000, the 55,000 backlog allotment will be phased out, and total family preference visas will rise from 465,000 to 480,000. Occupational preference visas will be combined with 55,000 "permanent diversity" visas (allocated among countries from which immigration was lower than 50,000 over the preceding five years). These form an independent group of 195,000 immigrants for employment purposes.

Other provisions shift the responsibility from Congress to the administration on the decision whether or not to admit immigrants with AIDS, provide citizenship to certain Filipine war veterans, make it a crime to import someone to work as a longshoreman, and change categories and ceilings for some "non-immigrants," such as entertainers and religious workers.

What will be the effect of the new law? It certainly will increase immigration. The current law resulted in 612,110 immigrants and refugees in FY 1989. The new law will allow for 700,000 immigrants plus the 130,000 refugees authorized by the President for the current year.

The Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Affairs notes that the law's "advantages" are a 35 percent increase in immigration on a permanent basis, no restriction on immediate relatives of citizens despite the new imposition of an overall ceiling, and a 300 percent increase in the number of skill-based immigrants.

—C.H.

CURRENT READINGS

PRB welcomes materials on population topics for possible inclusion in Current Readings. Publishers may address review copies to Book Review Editor, POPULATION TODAY, Population Reference Bureau, 777 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

FEAR OF FALLING: THE INNER LIFE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS, by Barbara Ehrenreich. New York: Harper Perennial, 1989. 292 pages. $9.95 paperback. ISBN 0-06-097333-1.

In this provocative book, social commentator Barbara Ehrenreich examines changes from 1950 to the present in the attitudes, values, and self-definition of the American middle class. She defines the middle class as the educated, white- collar, professional, middle- and upper-middle-income segment of society—which she sees as the sector that shapes American thought and sets the public agenda.

Following the affluence and flowering consumerism of the 1950s, the middle class discerned that not everyone shared equally in the "American dream." Middle-class liberals took their cue from the young President Kennedy and influential books such as Michael Harrington's *The Other America*—a spirit institutionalized in the programs of the Great Society.

At the same time, middle-class youth began their rebellion, apparently eschewing the paths of careerism and complacency that the "establishment" required. Middle-class liberals then rediscovered a new group that embodied the former middle-class virtues of hard work and self-discipline: the working class.

However, it was the "New Right" conservatives, not the middle-class liberals, who allied themselves with the working class. Conservatives cast themselves as champions of the working man's cause and his traditional "family" values. They portrayed liberals as out-of-touch academics with big-ticket social programs designed to benefit the indolent poor. Conservatives capitalized on working-class discontent, even though the conservative agenda was avowedly pro-management, big business, and anti-labor.

Today, says Ehrenreich, as the economic climate worsens and more working-class people slip into the ranks of the poor, the voice of the liberal middle class is weak and fragmented. The middle class sees itself economically threatened and, without apology, behaves as an elite. Politically, it seeks to protect its privilege, voting by pocket-book rather than conscience.

For this author, the challenge for the middle class now is to reach again beyond its borders, and work toward a more egalitarian society. Seen in the light of this fall's agonizing federal budget debates, Ehrenreich's message takes on a particular urgency.

—Alex de Sherbinin

REPRODUCTION AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, edited by Ron J. Lesthaeghe. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989. 556 pages. $65. ISBN 0-520-06363-5.

The 11 papers in this demographically sophisticated volume explore connections between characteristics of reproduction in sub-Saharan Africa and patterns of social organization in the region.

The papers link the work of anthropologists and demographers seeking to explain reproductive change in Africa. The book seeks to avoid what editor Lesthaeghe calls the "messy bag" treatment of culture too common in the field. "It is very easy to introduce a nominal variable denoting ethnic group or language in any multivariate analysis and to assess its statistical significance and impact on dependent variables. It is quite a different matter to explain on substantive grounds what such statistical results really mean. What is lacking is a much more precise specification of these 'cultural proxies.' "

Instead, the papers connect ethnicity to characteristics of social organization, such as the prevailing modes of kinship structure, division of labor, gender roles, and the structural changes in social organization introduced by non-African religions.

The authors examine such issues as whether a socioeconomic development threshold can explain slow fertility change, whether "universal and early" accurately describes African marriage patterns, and the role of polygyny in maintaining high fertility rates.

Readers will find a wealth of detail on data sources (with critiques of that data's quality), a richness of ethnographic information, thorough demographic analysis, and a consistency of argument.

The papers call into question a number of the standard assumptions made about population dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa: for example, the notion that failure to have children must always be a grave social stigma for women. Instead, sterile women often find niches in polygynous households. And the fairly common practices of child-fostering and "communal" child-rearing can reduce the cost of childbearing for individual mothers, a practice that may slow the adoption of a small-family norm.

The book concludes with a policy discussion stressing that reproductive change *is* occurring in Africa; change is slow for a variety of cultural reasons, but there are ways to design population programs that use local institutions and grassroots approaches to enhance change.

—Nancy Yinger

SPOTLIGHT

UNITED STATES

(Part 1 of 2)

Population (1990 est.): 251,641,000
Population Density: 71.1 persons/sq. mi. (27.4 persons/sq. km.)
Land Area: 3,539,289 sq. mi. (9,166,759 sq. km.)
Births per 1,000 Population: 16.6
Deaths per 1,000 Population: 8.7
Rate of Natural Increase: 0.79%
Total Fertility Rate: 1.99
Infant Mortality Rate: 9.4 per 1,000 live births
Life Expectancy at Birth: 74.9
GNP per Capita (1988): $19,780
Capital: Washington, D.C.

by Kelvin Pollard

Demographically and economically, the United States is clearly among the world's more developed countries (MDCs)—with low fertility, low mortality, an aging population, and a high standard of living. Yet MDCs are not all alike. The United States differs from Canada, Japan, and countries of Western Europe in many ways.

In this spotlight we will examine some traits that make the United States unique. Part 2, in the next issue of PT, will focus on some striking contrasts within our own borders.

On geography alone, the United States stands out among industrialized nations. This transcontinental land mass lying between Canada and Mexico covers 3.5 million square miles, making it the world's fourth largest country. Partly because of its large size, the United States is more sparsely populated than most other MDCs. It has 71 persons per square mile, while population densities of over 300 per square mile are common among European nations. Its vastness has contributed to its abundance in many agricultural and mineral resources. Yet like much of Europe and Japan, the United States does not produce enough energy to meet consumer demand. Energy production in 1986, for example, was 88 percent of consumption. Moreover, the United States, despite its diversified economy, is a net importer of goods and commodities, while many other MDCs are net exporters.

Until the end of World War II, the United States was virtually alone among MDCs in terms of its racial diversity. And, even though postwar immigration from Asia and Africa has made much of Western Europe more heterogeneous, the United States today remains even more so. For example, less than 3 percent of the United Kingdom's population is of non-European origin, while blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans compose 24 percent of the U.S. population.

On certain fertility and mortality measures, the United States is quite different from many other MDCs. Its rate of natural increase, at 0.79 percent, is at least double those of Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The U.S. total fertility rate (or—number of lifetime births per woman) has now reached 2.0, which is close to replacement level, but still considerably higher than most other industrialized nations. Infant mortality in the United States is among the highest in the developed world (although it is very low by world standards). The U.S. rate is twice that of Japan's, 67 percent higher than Sweden's, and 33 percent higher than Canada's.

The United States stands out in other ways as well. While nearly three in four Americans live in urban areas, Americans apparently feel ambivalent toward large cities, as indicated by the rapid suburbanization that followed World War II.

The government plays a more restricted role in the United States than in most other MDCs. U.S. tax receipts, at 30 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, are significantly lower than those in Switzerland, Canada, Britain, Germany, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, or Sweden. Citizens of those countries, however, receive comparatively more government services, such as child care and general health benefits. In the United States, many social services are provided by a mix of commercial, government, and nonprofit entities—a system that sometimes leaves holes in the social safety net.

Unlike many other MDCs, the U.S. capital is not its largest city. The same is true for 35 of the 50 state capitals.

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